



DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD



Inspection Report

Name of School: St Luke's Catholic Primary School

Unique Reference Number: 115169

Inspection Date: 11 March 2013

**Reporting Inspectors: Dr Michael Sutherland-Harper and
Mr Patrick Moloney**

This Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

**Type of School: Primary
School Category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 203
Appropriate Authority: The governing body
Date of previous inspection:**

**School Address: Pyenest Road
Harlow
CM19 4LU
Tel. No. : 01279 423499
Fax No. : 01279 626674
Chair of Governors: Mary Cooper
Headteacher: Ann Marie McCann (Interim HT)**

Introduction:

The Inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education (Schools) Act 2005 by two inspectors appointed by the Diocesan Bishop at the request of the Governing Body of the School.

The Inspectors acknowledge and are appreciative of the full support, co-operation and courtesy they enjoyed from the Governors, Headteacher, Staff and Pupils of the School both before and during the Inspection. The Inspectors wish to express their gratitude to all concerned.

The focus of the Section 48 Inspection was:

- Classroom Religious Education
- The Catholic nature of the School through:
 1. Worship
 2. Links with the Catholic and wider community
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

The Section 48 Report

**St Luke's Catholic Primary School
Pyenest Road
Harlow
CM19 4LU**

Head Teacher: Ann Marie McCann (Interim Headteacher)

Date of Inspection: 11 March 2013

Description of the School:

St Luke's Catholic Primary School is a smaller-than-average size primary school with one form of entry situated in Harlow and under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Brentwood. The school serves the parishes of St Luke's and Holy Cross. Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes of leadership at the school. The interim headteacher is supported in her role by the acting Deputy Head who is also R.E. co-ordinator. The school is proposing to become a sponsored academy under the trusteeship of another Catholic primary school in Harlow.

Record of Evidence Base:

Two Diocesan Inspectors were in the school for the equivalent of two inspection days.

- The study of pre-inspection documentation including the Self-Evaluation Form/ Denominational Provision (SEF/DP).
- The observation of seven lessons.
- Participation in an assembly.
- Scrutiny of pupils' written work.
- Meetings with the interim Headteacher, the Head of Religious Education (R.E.), the Chair of Governors and another governor, and a group of pupils including members of the School Council.
- Observations of R.E. displays in the classrooms and around the school.

What the School does well:

In the words of its mission statement, St Luke's Catholic Primary School is coming together again 'in God's love' after a period of some turbulence and reinforcing its core values of respect for each other, hard work and following the example of Jesus. The school requires further improvement before it can become the good school which it aspires to be.

A considerable number of pupils are not from Catholic families but all pupils understand the school's mission statement. Pupils interviewed during the inspection valued the opportunity to be involved with the school's work through membership of the School Council, in assemblies (where behaviour was very good) and as playground leaders. They know there is always an adult to whom they can turn for pastoral support if they have problems of any kind. Behaviour is improving after a period of some fluctuation but is not yet consistently good.

Pupils have regular opportunities to participate in prayer in classrooms and assemblies which also involve dramatic presentations of Biblical material but collective worship requires further improvement. Pupils make visits to the local church where class Masses are now held in addition to the whole school Masses. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school but both he and the school recognize the need for closer links between the school and its parish, a point also raised by parents and carers in their questionnaire responses. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is securely promoted through display, assemblies and occasional visits and visitors. It is reinforced by prominent prayer corners in each classroom. However, prayers in classes are not always pupil-led and opportunities for reflection are sometimes limited to work with 'talk partners'.

The interim headteacher, governors and the head of Religious Education recognize that the school is on a journey and that the journey is at an early stage. New resources have been acquired to ensure that Religious Education can be effectively delivered across the school with an emphasis on consistent high quality application of the Come and See

programme. Further training of staff is planned, including of teaching assistants, whose classroom roles are currently inconsistently developed. Development plans for Religious Education lack precise dates at present, including for review, and are a mix of long- and short-term targets, not all of which are as important as each other. Similarly, the whole school development plan lacks reference to Religious Education and its development at the core of this Catholic school. Considerable staffing turbulence over the last 18 months has impacted on the rate of progress in implementing improvements to the school. The head of R.E. has been in place for 7 months and much of this time has been involved with implementing clear systems and expectations in the subject.

Teaching in Religious Education requires improvement. Some teaching is good but the number of good lessons is not yet high enough. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low and inconsistent so pupils do not uniformly know where they stand. Books lack targets and opportunities for extended writing are limited. Presentation is variable in exercise books. Display in classrooms reinforces many subjects but not Religious Education.

The R.E. curriculum, based on the new 'Come and See' Religious Education programme of study, recommended by the Bishop of the Diocese, is being fully implemented. The school meets the national and diocesan requirements for the allocation of curriculum time for taught R.E. Teachers have secure subject knowledge but there is not enough sharing of what they do best in the classroom. The school has identified the need for further training for teachers and teaching assistants in both delivery of the syllabus and assessment procedures in R.E. The head of R.E. is due to attend a forthcoming diocesan training session on assessment and intends to implement its recommendation afterwards in consultation with the diocesan education service.

Pupils are engaged with learning in R.E. lessons where behaviour is good. In lessons where the teacher talks for too long and pace and challenge are lacking, pupils have less time to explore ideas on their own. Pupils with special educational needs or who are disabled make similar progress to their peers. In some lessons, planning ensures that work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities but in other lessons, planning is too general and does not link closely enough to the learning objectives in the new syllabus. The focus is too often on the delivery of the particular unit of work without precise reference to long-term pupil targets in the subject and development of overall understanding of the Catholic faith. Links between R.E. and other parts of the curriculum such as literacy are not yet well-developed. As a result, Religious Education is not yet fully at the heart of the school's work and the ethos of the school is not as prominent as it might otherwise be expected to be.

The school's Catholic ethos is being strengthened through the interim headteacher's focus on an inclusive school with high standards and shared and consistent values. Governors are committed in their support and have begun to raise the level of challenge they offer. Pupils are increasingly respectful of adults and of each other. The school is once again pulling together and striving to regain its place at the heart of the community as ambassadors for Catholic faith and values. The journey has begun.

What needs to be improved?

Develop and implement

- **consistent expectations of behaviour, progress and outcomes in all classes**
- **an assessment programme for Religious Education across all key stages and with regular reviews**
- **opportunities for extended writing in Religious Education**
- **the role of teaching assistants in all lessons**
- **sharing of best practice between teachers and between teaching assistants by regular observation of classroom strengths.**

The Inspectors endorse the areas identified by the school for improvement in the Section 48 Self-Evaluation Form.

St Luke's Catholic Primary School is a school which requires improvement. The school is an inclusive community which is regaining its sense of purpose after a period of some turbulence. The headteacher, staff, pupils and governors are committed to that work.